

Congressional Oversight Provisions in P.L. 116-127, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act

March 24, 2020

President Donald Trump signed P.L. 116-127 ([H.R. 6201](#)), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, on March 18, 2020. The act provides supplemental appropriations for [nutrition assistance programs](#) and [public health services](#) and authorizes the Internal Revenue Service to implement tax credits for paid emergency sick leave and expanded family medical leave that the act requires certain employers to provide. In addition, the law adjusts the unemployment insurance program to waive temporarily certain eligibility requirements and provide more federal financial support to the states.

P.L. 116-127 is the second supplemental appropriation enacted that specifically addresses the COVID-19 pandemic following the enactment of P.L. 116-123 ([H.R. 6074](#)) on March 6, 2020. [As was the case for P.L. 116-123](#), P.L. 116-127 includes oversight provisions designed to support Congress's ability to monitor and evaluate the executive branch's implementation of the act.

As Congress continues to play a significant role in the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining a consistent flow of useful information to Congress from the executive branch may be crucial for Congress's ability to exercise its oversight responsibilities. Including statutorily mandated oversight mechanisms in legislation may be a particularly important tool for Congress following reports of the White House's decision on Tuesday March 17, 2020, [to stop participating in ongoing hearings on the subject through the end of March](#).

This Insight details selected oversight provisions included in P.L. 116-127 that mandate reporting to Congress. All of CRS's materials on the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact, and the federal government's response are available [here](#).

Congressional Reporting Requirements in P.L. 116-127

P.L. 116-127 establishes the following reporting requirements:

- Section 1701 of Division A requires the head of each executive agency that receives a supplemental appropriation in the bill to provide a report on anticipated uses of those

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN11271

- funds to the Appropriations Committees within 30 days of enactment (i.e., April 17, 2020). The provision also requires that each agency provide the Appropriations Committees updated reports every 60 days thereafter.
- Section 2302(c) of Division B requires the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report to the Agriculture Committees on the flexibilities the act provides in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The report is to discuss the measures taken by the Department of Agriculture to “address the food security needs of affected populations during the emergency,” provide any available supporting data related to SNAP waivers granted to states under the act, and disclose any “measures that States requested that were not granted.” In addition, the report is to include recommended changes to the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that would assist preparations for future health emergencies. The report is to be submitted within 18 months of termination of the [public health emergency declaration](#) related to COVID-19.

Section 4102(a) of Division D amends Section 903 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. §1103) to include, among other things, a requirement that each state receiving emergency administration grant funding for its unemployment insurance program under the act submit a report to the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance (as well as the Secretary of Labor). These reports are due within one year of enactment of the act (i.e., March 18, 2021) and are to include “an analysis of the reciprocity rate for unemployment compensation in the State as such rate has changed over time” and “a description of the steps the State intends to take to increase such reciprocity rate.”

Author Information

Ben Wilhelm
Analyst in Government Organization and Management

•

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS’s institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.